

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A281,9

V59

RECORDED

Report of Annual PMA Conference

of

Vermont State and County Committeemen and Secretaries-Treasurers

Held at Hotel Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

April 27 - 28, 1950

Foreword

The following report of the Annual Vermont PMA Conference gives a resume of the conference agenda, copies of the major talks during the two days and the conference committee recommendations which were developed by the four groups and later reviewed and approved by the general conference. These reports covered four phases of Vermont PMA work, namely, Program Planning, Administrative Problems, Public Relations, and Price Support.

Throughout the conference the agricultural leaders in attendance, the county agents, and others gave of their time, their interest and their participation in the many phases of the State's PMA program as it was presented and discussed.

The Vermont State PMA Committee and State Office representatives sincerely appreciate the interest and efforts of all who participated in making the 1950 conference a success. It was a working conference, a fact-finding conference, and developed many guides for the PMA program in the months ahead.

We sincerely appreciate the efforts of all who helped make it so.

State Committee

Park H. Newton, Chairman

Leon Brainerd, Vice Chairman

Thomas F. Macauley, Member

L. Earl Wilson, Member

Hugh E. Evans, Member

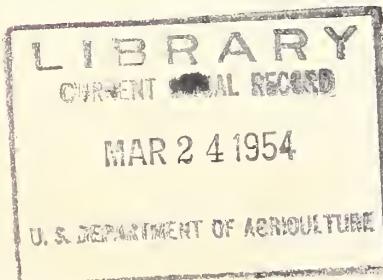
State Office

A. F. Heald, Executive Officer

T. H. Blow, Administrative Officer

E. N. Blondin, Fieldman

C. B. Doane, Fieldman



Speaking Program Highlights

What We Hope To Accomplish

In opening the conference Park Newton, Chairman of the Vermont PMA State Committee, relayed this message to the group:

Our Conference Goal

"We have had 15 years of conservation work under our program. We hope to take the experience of all who are interested in conservation and blend their ideas into the best program ever for 1951.

"This year's conference again will be a working one -- we will get out of it as much as we put in -- everyone must contribute.

"In these/two days we want to get better acquainted with each other and our mutual problems."

AGENDA
VERMONT PMA CONFERENCE
Hotel Vermont, Burlington, Vermont
April 27 - 28, 1950

First Day

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Register, get name tags and banquet tickets at Conference Registration Desk in Lobby

Conference Opened by Leon N. Brainerd, Presiding

10:00 a.m. What We Hope to Accomplish - Introduction of Delegates and Visitors Park H. Newton, Chairman PMA State Committee

10:30 a.m. How Our Program Can Contribute the Most Toward Conservation Thomas Ayers, Program Planning Div., ACP Branch

11:30 a.m. Our Conservation Experience in Maine Fred J. Nutter, Chairman Maine State PMA Committee

12:30 p.m. Adjourn for Lunch

Thomas F. Macauley, Presiding

1:30 p.m. Outline Procedure for State Committee Nominations Leon N. Brainerd, Vice Chairman, PMA State Com.

1:45 p.m. Conference Committee Assignments Park H. Newton, Chairman PMA State Committee

A. Program Planning Committee
B. Administrative Problems Committee
C. Public Relations Committee
D. Price Support Committee

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Conference Committee Meetings

6:30 p.m. Conference Banquet - Green Room - Main Floor

Toastmaster - Park H. Newton, Chairman, PMA State Committee

Guest Speakers:

"What's the PMA Job?" - C. Ely Wickham, Administrator's Fieldman, PMA (substituting for Deputy PMA Administrator Frank Woolley)

"Society's Responsibility in Conservation" - Senator George D. Aiken

SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR SECRETARIES-TREASURERS

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 27, 1950

STATE PMA OFFICE - 102 ADAMS STREET

Presiding: Bertha Saunders

1:30 p.m.	County Association Expense Accounts - Budgets and Their Use at State Office Level	Bertha D. Saunders, Clerk (Auditor)
2:00 p.m.	The Handling of CMS Orders at the State Office	Irene Abell Program Specialist
2:30 p.m.	The Handling of Applications for Payment and Supplies at the State Office	Marcia D. Tudhope Clerk
3:00 p.m.	Problems Regarding Potato Work	Madelene Bevins Clerk
3:30 p.m.	Question and Answer Period - All Subjects	

Note:

Discussions concerned individual county problems principally, and secretaries were able to get answers to those things of interest to them.

AGENDA
VERMONT PMA CONFERENCE

Second Day

L. Earl Wilson, Presiding

9:00 a.m.	My Observations of Conservation Work in Vermont	Arthur Packard, President Vermont State Farm Bureau
9:45 a.m.	My Observations of the Committee- man's Job	Robert Sinclair, Wash- ington County Agent
	Some Agricultural Conservation Gains in Orleans County	Roger Whitcomb, Orleans County Agent
	SCS-PMA Cooperation at the County Level	Alton Best, District Conservationist
10:45 a.m.	Report of Committee on Program Planning	Thomas Macauley, Member, PMS State Committee
	Discussion - Changes - Adoption	
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	

Hugh E. Evans, Presiding

1:30 p.m.	Report of Committee on Public Relations	Hugh E. Evans, Member PMA State Committee
	Discussion - Changes - Adoption	
2:00 p.m.	Report of Committee on Administrative Problems	Leon N. Brainerd, Vice Chairman, PMA State Committee
	Discussion - Changes - Adoption	
2:30 p.m.	Report of Committee on Price Support	L. Earl Wilson, Member PMA State Committee
	Discussion - Changes - Adoption	
3:00 p.m.	Nominations for State Committee	Leon N. Brainerd, Vice Chairman, PMA State Committee

"HOW OUR PROGRAM CAN CONTRIBUTE
THE MOST TOWARDS CONSERVATION"

by
Thomas Ayers
Program Planning Division, ACP Branch

and

"OUR CONSERVATION EXPERIENCE IN MAINE"

by
Fred Nutter
Chairman, Maine PMA State Committee

These two talks by Mr. Ayers and Mr. Nutter are reproduced in their entirety and made a part of the conference report.

They are well worth reading.

Conference Banquet

"What's the PMA Job?"

This talk which was to be given by Frank Woolley, Assistant PMA Administrator, had to be substituted with a general review of the entire PMA program by C. Ely Wickham, Administrator's Fieldman for this area. This was necessary because of transportation problems encountered by Mr. Woolley en route from Washington, D. C.

However, Mr. Wickham very ably "filled the bill" and passed on to the group the challenge that faced them. This challenge was not only in making the ACP program work so as to get the most conservation per dollar spent, but also in having the committeeman a better trained and informed man. He must not only know the practices, but also be well schooled in the field of price support, marketing problems, etc., said Mr. Wickham.

It was Wickham's opinion that our major problem was to find some way to successfully live with abundance. He also commented that the PMA program is being attacked from many quarters and we must not let that adverse feeling become prevalent. Because of this, committeemen must be well trained and able to correct errors through good information.

"Good Administration Suggested As Answer to Criticism"

by Frank K. Woolley
Deputy Administrator, PMA

Note: Even though Mr. Frank K. Woolley, Deputy Administrator of PMA, could not be with us at our 1950 Annual Conference, we have received his permission to use as part of our report the following summary of the talk he would have presented to the Vermont meeting:

The best way of answering criticisms of farm programs is good administration, Frank K. Woolley, Deputy Administrator of the Production and Marketing Administration recently told a farm meeting in Burlington, Vermont.

"We might as well face it," Mr. Woolley said, "farm programs are being criticised today in more than one quarter. Some of this criticism is honest; some of it is not. Some of it is constructive, and inspired by a real desire to build on and improve individual programs. We want and need criticism of this type.

"But some of it is directed toward discrediting the whole idea of farm programs. And that is disturbing, and of serious concern to all who are interested in the welfare of agriculture as a contributing member to a sound national economy.

"The best way of answering such criticism, of course, is to do such a good job of administering farm programs, of improving farm programs, and of spreading an understanding of farm programs, that there is no longer any basis for, or credence given to, unfriendly attacks.

"I am confident that the farmer-committeemen... will measure up to that challenge... I have no misgivings about the way committeemen carry out their duties or help others to understand the intent and methods of farm programs. My purpose is to underline the necessity for renewed efforts along those lines..."

"We who work closely with farm programs realize that the Department of Agriculture doesn't write its own ticket on any of them. The Department is merely an administrative branch, and must function within the framework of laws laid down by the Congress.

"Our job is to so discharge our responsibilities that PMA programs may continue to serve the national interest by helping farmers adjust to the changing demands of the world situation."

"Society's Responsibility In Conservation"

Senator George D. Aiken devoted much of his talk to a discussion of price supports and other elements in a farm program. He stated that an agricultural program is not for farmers alone, but the consumers as well. Price supports and a sound marketing program should go hand in hand, said Senator Aiken. He also felt the milk surplus would be a major problem during the next three or four years.

On conservation, Senator Aiken said, "Care and proper use of land concerns every last one of us." He also stressed that agricultural conservation was vital to all who believe in the security and prosperity of our country.

Other Speakers

The excellent talks given by Arthur Packard, President, Vermont State Farm Bureau; Robert Sinclair, Washington County Agent; Roger Whitcomb, Orleans County Agent; and Alton Best, SCS District Conservationist are given in full and made a part of this conference report. They are well worth reviewing.

Committee Reports

The four committee reports presented the second day of the conference are made a part of this conference report.

TALK GIVEN BY
THOMAS AYERS OF WASHINGTON

at the
VERMONT FMA STATE CONFERENCE, APRIL 27, 1950

Mr. Chairman, this is excellent weather. I got in about six o'clock this morning and it was here then, Mr. Chairman, and I had ordered this from South Carolina, so I have been going around claiming credit for it. Anyway, it is nice to be back with you folks. I was here last year, my first trip to Vermont, and we visited together a little. At that time I was afraid I wouldn't have the opportunity to come back, as I said some things that I wasn't too sure that you agreed with, at least I hoped you wouldn't agree with them, but I think sometimes we have to be over-positive about some things in order for you to think about them. But I am glad to be back today. I don't always succeed in doing the thing I want to do and I may not today.

I came here to talk to you people, and I am just afraid that when we get through that I will be in bad shape, but if you will help me out, we will talk about some things that I think we are all interested in.

Last year I said a few things that I may repeat here this morning. One thing that I said, as I recall, was something like this: that it is the purpose of our ACP program to provide aid to individuals who have need of that aid in order that they can do things on their own farms that need to be done in the public interest -- that they couldn't and wouldn't do without that aid. Now I don't know whether you agreed with me or not, but I believe that deep down the real purpose of this program, that is, what we have got to try to do, is to direct that aid in the amount we have, farm by farm, to the things that need to be done and can't be gotten done by some other less expensive means, yet almost have to be done, not just for that farm, but in the interest of the whole nation. I went on and said another thing that I hope you thought about this year. I compared our program. I spoke of it as a piece of equipment comparable to your farm equipment, I believe, and I pointed out that that, just like a planter out on your farm, can't do a good job unless the harrows and the turnplows and other things have prepared the job. In the same way our program is relatively ineffective unless other programs designed to make a contribution to conservation have also done their job well. And at the end of the year the farmer doesn't look around and say that my forage crop was the result of the job done by this one or that one, or at least I have never heard a farmer do that, but he thinks of the crop as the result of the total effort of all of the equipment and his own skill.

So it seems to me that the public is looking to us to understand what these other tools can do effectively, where they need to be used, how they can contribute, and finally fit this tool of ours in there and make it do the best possible job that it can in relation to the efforts of other folks. Now we could list some of those tools.

I am stressing this point, folks, for this reason -- I think that we and FMA country-wide have about made a mistake. Maybe we haven't made it yet, but we are about to make a mistake. We are about to conclude in some parts of the country that this tool is so good it can go ahead and do the job without the effort of some other tools that also have to do a good job, and we can't.

I don't know whether I said this or not, but, if I didn't, I want to say it here this morning. To get anything done in conservation or anything else, you have got to have three things. I think if you will think with me a minute you will agree with this. The individual has got to want to do that particular thing. We will illustrate that. He has got to know how to do it, but you can have those two things and you still won't get the job done. What is lacking in addition to that? Well, you have got to have the means to do it.

Now, you can illustrate that. Some of you county agents recall having seen the old illustration, there are many others, of the barrel with the various length staves in it. You remember that, don't you? And we will say that one of those staves down here when our program came in, we will label that "Means", and it was very low. We also had farmers who had the stave of desire to do a better job of conservation, and this was relatively high. There were a good many people who were wanting to do certain conservation jobs, wanted to manage their resources better, and so the stave of "Know How" was relatively high, and we came in here and we built up, and the water that would stand in that barrel was only up to the lowest stave. The amount of conservation you could get done was limited by the means at hand. We came in here and we built that up, and we very quickly got a lot of water in that barrel. We are proud of that progress. I am, as one who was in there the day AAA, or that is, ACP was born. I had a part in giving birth to it. I am just as proud as I can be of our program, and I will fight anybody in the United States who criticizes it unfairly. I don't care who it is. I have tried it; I will defend it; and I believe we can, Mr. Chairman, anywhere; but that doesn't mean to say that it has done all that needs to be done, or all that it can do. We have come up now to where our progress has slowed down.

Some folks think that the only thing that we need is more wherewithal, more means; if we just had a bigger appropriation we would get the job done. I am not one who believes that. I do believe we need more appropriation. I do think we could invest more wisely, but I think that there are many cases right now, and I think we are finding that, Mr. Williams, in those counties where we are working as we are here in Chittenden, where the committeemen are going over the farm plans in detail. I think we are finding many cases where the means are at hand, the know-how is there, but the other factors are lacking. There are plenty of people who could do better if they wanted to bad enough, and to want to bad enough calls for real education. I believe you county agents, I think there isn't a question but what you are doing everything you can, but I think our committeemen must give more attention to that problem and help to make your effort go farther by means that I think are available to us, by stimulating interest on the part of people to go themselves to the source of information in lots of cases, and not wait for it to be brought to them. And I may repeat that I think it is basic for folks to realize that you can't get additional conservation just by providing means. And, on the other hand, there are people going around over the country saying things that I believe deep down in their hearts they know are lies -- that you don't need the means, that you can get it done just by making them want to do it -- and it is just as foolish with either one left out.

If you leave out the desire and have the means, you don't get it. If you leave out the means and have the desire, you don't get it. You leave out know-how and you won't get the job done, so you can't say that one is more important than the other. You have got to admit, I think, when you think about it, that we need all of those and that we can't get very far just by saying we will do this without the other.

That leads me to discuss briefly here the real question that I think your committee had in mind when they asked me to come here. They really gave me a hard one, the \$64 question. I guess you all know what it is, don't you? You read it in your folders? Tom, I believe it was something like this: "How Our Program Can Be Made to Contribute More to Conservation." I assume there, Mr. Brainerd, that you are referring to the ACP part of our program, are you? I interpret it that way. How can it be made to contribute more to our conservation?

Well, I am going to tell you right quick that I don't know. That is the easiest way to answer that question. I don't know. I am not so sure that anybody knows. But we have got fifteen years of experience behind us. We have worked hard at it, about one hundred thousand committeemen and a few other folks. Surely we have learned a few things in the fifteen years, and I am going to mention a few of them here, and then as Mr. Brainerd suggests we want to really back off and talk about things.

I think one of the first things that will be required, we have got to have committeemen who mean business, who are interested, who themselves want to make this program contribute. Now we have a high percentage of them who have that. We have got to have committeemen who know what needs to be done out here. I think we have got to have committeemen better posted on what it takes to achieve conservation of soil, of water, of our woodland and our forest, under the conditions that prevail on his own farm and in his neighborhood before we can go very far. That means we have got to provide some kind of systematic way of keeping these committeemen at least abreast of the new things in the field of conservation generally. Now, as I understand it, Mr. Wickham may have a different idea. Some of the rest of you may have different ideas, but I myself believe that the reason that we have the local committeemen -- (I never talked to the congressman who spelled that out into law) -- but I always have the feeling that the reason they set up this committeeman system was so that we would have a farmer out here who knew the conditions on each of his neighbors' farms. He knew what that neighbor had already done and was trying to do, and was able to do. To give us a basis for directing aid to the spot that it needed to go to get something done that couldn't be done otherwise, and that needed to be done in proper order so that that farmer would move forward towards where he was trying to go. I don't know whether you feel that was why we had a committee system or not, but I think that was one of the basic reasons so that we could get that judgment and get that direction to our efforts.

Well, it seems to me then that a requirement is we must have committeemen who know those conditions that their neighbors have, know their problems, know what they are trying to do and what it takes for them outside of their own efforts, what it will take for them to do the constructive thing that needs to be done. That won't make our program contribute more.

I would like to suggest at least two other things. Now you county agents may disagree with this idea. If you do, let's argue it out. I don't believe you will, but you might. I have had a few who have. But I believe that these committeemen, as they find out what their neighbors really are trying to do that is constructive and what they lack to be able to do that, will find that a great deal of what is lacking is in things that our ACP can provide. In many cases it will be additional information that he lacks in order to reach a conclusion about what he ought to do about a problem that he recognizes. Many times that committeeman will find that his neighbor has a problem that he doesn't actually recognize that he has. Now that calls for still more information and

more skillful work to get him to recognize it. You know that, those of you experienced in teaching, but it seems to me that our committeemen can make a tremendous contribution if they know what he lacks, and then if they are familiar enough with what others can offer, if they can direct that man to the place and cooperate with those who are to do this other job, so that their efforts can be multiplied. I would like to have you discuss that. I think that this approach that is being made right here in Chittenden County is bringing that out in the counties all across the nation. Tremendous opportunities there, Mr. Williams.

We will have to have committeemen who thoroughly understand what the present program can do. I want to illustrate that with at least two illustrations. I am not going to use an illustration here, because I have never been out in the county office here, and you will just have to try to see if my illustrations apply. I want to go to my home community, where I grew up. It's a very poor community. It's backwoods, small farms. It's almost altogether row crops, and it's a coastal county. I was in that home community about five years ago and I visited with some of my neighbors and talked to them about this program and whether or not it was meeting problems that they had. I know the county wasn't using over twenty-five per cent of the available funds, and yet I know the needs that existed there. It very quickly developed that in that neighborhood there was one problem that stood out. One man had tried to do something about it. He wasn't a committeeman, but a local farmer. He had gone to the county office. He had heard of a provision in the National Bulletin that permitted them to pool their resources. I don't know whether you use that here or not. He went to the county office and he wanted to dig a little ditch. He couldn't do it finally because it had to go through a couple of other folks' land to get the surplus water off. The county office said, "Well, you will have to go back and sketch it." So he went back 30 miles and drew the best sketch he could, and he came back and laid it before them, and they said it wasn't worth the paper it was written on, and that is all they told him. Happened to be a nephew of mine, and he said "to heck with them." He said, "I will never go back to the county office." But still the problem was there.

Well, then I worked on another fellow, and I could see that it really involved twenty little farms. They needed to run a ditch that about twenty of them would have to join in on. I got word to the county committee -- I didn't get to go there -- and yet no action. The offer was sitting there, Tom, plenty of money to help finance. The need was out there. What did they lack? It wasn't enough to offer just the financial aid. What they needed the county committee didn't provide but could have provided. What they needed was a few hours of somebody's time with a level who knew how to go out there and make a little preliminary survey of that ditch. They couldn't afford to sign up an agreement saying we are going to do thus and so until they knew approximately what it would cost. They got their ditch last summer after four years. I went and looked at it two weeks ago yesterday, I believe it was. That one little ditch has opened the door to conservation farms in that little neighborhood. Now with the surplus water off they can rotate their crops. They couldn't before; they had to plant their main crop on the little knolls. They are already making plans for correcting mineral deficiencies and for rotating their crop properly. There is one illustration.

Down in another state the other day, I won't call the name, meeting a community committee, once again a community committeeman brought up this question. Why is it that we can't get some use, or can't speed up this thing? He said, "Our folks have their income on the downturn." Maybe you don't have that up here, but that seems to be a common problem. And he said, "We are finding it very hard to put out this money," and he gave an illustration. He said, "On January 20, 1949," (he used a personal approach) "I had a certain practice carried out." I quizzed him a little later because he aroused my curiosity immediately, and he said that he made the payment and it happened that it called for a machine that he didn't own, and his neighbors didn't own, and he had to get it from outside. It happened that the total bill was about \$420, and our program was to pay about \$160 of that. But he had to put that up before the machine would come on the place. That was January 20, 1949, and he was guessing until January 1, 1950 before he got that aid. There is an illustration of a case where everything was in the program to go ahead and advance that to that fellow, where he wouldn't have to put out that \$160 and he could have taken that \$160 that he had put out and gone ahead and done other conservation. He could have more total conservation on that particular farm had we directed the aid in the form and at the time and the place that that fellow needed it.

I can give you similar illustrations all over the country where we have in our program provisions that the community committeemen, and in many cases county committeemen, have never heard about and don't understand. Now the first thing then we must do is be sure that our committees thoroughly understand the adjustments that are in this program.

Another thing in order for this program to contribute the most, means that committeemen, (I am speaking primarily now of community committeemen -- I think it applies to them more) -- our community committeemen must study these problems that their neighbors have, manage more carefully, give you the counsel that you have to have, in order that you can build succeeding programs that really fit the needs out there. I mean not just only say we need aid on this practice, but tell you the amount of aid it is going to take, not the amount you are due to put in there, but the amount it will take to get the job done, and tell you what form it will have to be in and when it will have to be provided and so on.

And still another requirement -- those committeemen, most of them, including you and the rest of us, must administer this program so that it does what it is capable of doing.

Now you wonder, well, how can you do some of those things. I can't tell you of course. I do want to comment briefly on what we are learning. We can't be positive about it, but what are we learning through this program that is being carried on in Chittenden and similar counties? I say we can't tell you what we are learning, but we are learning a few things. I think that I may leave out some of the most important things, but I think it is obvious already that the committeemen, a great majority of them, want to do the best possible job. Now we already knew that in a way, but this has strengthened that conviction. Community committeemen, a great majority of them, want to do a good job. It seems to me that we are learning better than we knew before that they do need help very badly and that they have been sadly neglected. We have elected them and talked briefly to them, and maybe some times we haven't even told them what they are supposed to do. We had a case the other day in a neighboring state

where one of the community committeeman was asked to say what he considered the community committeeman's job. He said when he was elected he thought he was elected because nobody else would take the job, and the only conception he had of his responsibilities was to go down the road and sign up the neighbors. He said nobody instructed him on what the committeeman's responsibilities were. I think our special effort here is bringing that out pretty clear. They need help. They need a lot of information over and above program information in order that they can intelligently direct this big program of aid.

I think we are learning that most farmers have a program. I don't think we are learning so far, Mr. Baldwin, and Mr. Williams, that most farmers have a good program, taking the nation as a whole. I don't know. I haven't talked to you enough here. We are learning that most of them have something in mind. Quite often it is quite hazy beyond just a few months. But I believe we are learning, I can't be positive about it, but I think we are learning that by looking ahead as we work with this and follow this approach, that we will eventually have most of those farmers who will be looking much farther down the road, and therefore be wanting to do these things much more so than they do now, and be exerting themselves a great deal more than they are now, and therefore, we will be able to take a dollar of aid and get a great deal more mileage out of it than we are able to get now.

Mr. Chairman, these are about the only suggestions that I want to make right now. I might want to, if I have got time, by way of emphasis I might want to run over those again at the risk of boring you.

I do want to mention that we might just as well make up our mind that we have got to have three things here if we are going to make progress. You can't make progress with a man or in a community or in a state or county unless you want to do something, unless you know how to do it, and have the means.

I said that I believe that if we are going to make progress, if this program is going to make its real contribution that the public has a right to expect of us, we must administer that program as trustees for the public. We must inform ourselves properly as to what each neighbor is trying to do and wants to do, and we must direct every dollar in such a way that it gets the maximum progress possible under his conditions. We, I think, must study our program more thoroughly than we have in the past, its opportunities and flexibilities, and make the adjustments that can be made right now in the present program, and if they aren't adequate, for goodness' sake, let's put into it what it takes to make it possible to do that. We can't do it unless you folks tell us what you need. That is, our job is to make this program fit your needs.

You will find that you need to help your community committeeman with more information and not leave them quite as much on their own as we have in the past.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

TALK GIVEN BY
FRED NUTTER OF MAINE
at the
VERMONT PMA STATE CONFERENCE, APRIL 27, 1950

Well, as your chairman said, ladies and gentlemen, I am principally a farmer, not much of a detail man, so I went down to the college when I learned I was coming here to get briefed a little on the details of our program in Maine. Well, this is about the way the college people "briefed" me. (Displayed bulletins.)

Certainly glad to bring to you greetings from Maine PMA people. We have been associated in many conferences for many years with Vermont folks, particularly in dairy conferences, and we always feel kind of small in Maine in a dairy conference talking with Vermont folks. As I drove over here yesterday, it occurred to me that probably the reason why you keep so many more cows than we do is that you farm both sides of your land. I think that is probably the main reason. I know you have got a lot out of this conservation program. I think perhaps it has meant a lot to New England, perhaps more than to some other folks because we do raise the basic commodities that are mainly governed by most of our price support programs in PMA, particularly Vermont. You are a livestock State. You are interested in grass and you have been able to get something out of this conservation program.

Now, we have been having a series of conferences with State Committeemen, and we have been challenged somewhat about our program, not only in Maine but probably in other places, but particularly our minerals program. I think perhaps it is a good thing. Perhaps it is a good thing to put us on the defensive where we have got to defend our position, because after all, nothing is perfect in this world, and it is well for us to stand back and look at our program and see if we can defend it. I feel that probably up until now we have done the best job we could do with what we have had to do with, and I am speaking now of New England generally. We have taken the funds that have been granted to us, and I think we have tried to do the best possible job so far as we could see it with those funds to help our northeast agriculture, and I feel that we can defend the job we have done and I have enjoyed working with this conservation program.

For one thing the program has been set up in such a way that we have been able to break it down so that each community, each state, each county and there has been enough variation, enough flexibility, so that we could make the program fit our needs, and I hope that as we go on into the future that same thing may continue. In fact, I think it must continue if we are going to have a sound program and really do the job.

Our problems in Maine are not the same as yours entirely. We are not as thoroughly a livestock state in Maine as you are here in Vermont. A lot of our farmers are cash crop farmers, and we have a lot of conservation problems that are not so important here, and we need a different kind of a program in Maine than you people need, just as down in Mr. Ayer's state they need a different kind of a program, and I hope as we move forward we will always keep that in mind, that the only place to determine the right kind of a practice is there

on the spot -- the people who know the conditions in that particular area. Consequently, I am not coming over here from Maine and attempt to tell you people how you ought to run your conservation program. I am just going to tell you some of the things we have learned in Maine under our conditions.

We started almost entirely with a minerals program -- lime and superphosphate, and probably because potatoes are our one important crop in Maine, we have had to question that a little more than you people, because, if any of you grow potatoes, you know that you can't put too much lime on potato land without having too much trouble, and that has probably led us to a soil testing program a little faster than other states. After a few years we began to find that some spots in our potato fields were giving a scab, even though we were following Experiment Station and Extension recommendations fairly well. We still found that we were getting scab, and that led to a soil testing service to find out what was the matter, first on an experimental basis, and then in 1937 the service was set up, not through PMA, but by the Extension Service and the Experiment Station, and farmers could take their own samples and send them in, and they were doing that up through the late thirties. Around four or five thousand samples a year were coming in there and being tested. The main trouble with it -- as farmers took their own samples, many of them didn't understand how to take samples, and on fields that were irregular the results were never too satisfactory. They could be very misleading, and on fields that showed some scab, potato fields, samples would be taken more or less haphazard over the field, and go in there and show that the field still needed lime, and that is very possible.

Well, now, of course that problem was discussed a good deal, and the State Committee of PMA felt that we ought to begin to find out where we were going with the lime program, because a lot of our land, even potato soil, was in serious danger of getting too much lime on it. So we developed the idea of a special practice -- started over in Oxford County. A committee over there first started the idea that they wanted a special practice of soil testing, and while we had some trouble selling the idea to our conservation friends in Washington under the special practice regulation, it did get by, and we tried it out that way, and in 1948 we had this practice on 360 farms and 1725 samples were taken. Well, it looked pretty good and the other counties picked the idea up, and we decided then a better way to handle it was through a service rather than through a practice, and so we made a joint deal with the Extension Service and Experiment Station to perform this service. And the way it worked out is this: The PMA organization takes the samples and pays for them, that is, we hire the personnel, mostly community committeemen. Those people are trained by experts in the Extension Service, and they have to be very carefully trained. They go out to the farm and they take out this sheet and about four copies. You will notice that on the sheets they have to draw a map of the field, and they have to divide that map up according to the way the land lies. If there is a knoll in the field, they have to show that, and if there is a sag it has to show, and the sample has to be taken in that area. These people are very carefully trained, and they go out with these sheets and instruments for taking samples. Now, their job is to get a right good sample of that field. They send the sample and the sheets to the Experiment Station laboratory, and fortunately we were able to get a new plant science building at the university completed last year, partly through the efforts of people in PMA who were interested in this project, so we do have very good facilities to handle the work. They are sent to the plant science laboratory and analyzed. They use there the Beckman glass electrode pH meter.

The results of the test are sent to the top specialist, Mr. Wyman in the Extension Service, and Mr. Wyman fills out the bottom part of that sheet. There are four copies of that come back -- one to the farmer, one is retained, one to the county agent in the county that farmer lives in, and the last to the county PMA office -- and we are building some wonderful files of information in those county offices about the kind of soil we are farming on. I want to say that we are really getting some mighty good information. Now the State Committee and the county committee have decided to make the soil test mandatory if a man is going to have lime.

We haven't yet gone that far on superphosphate and potash, but we do feel since our summaries that we are getting in now show that from 35 to 45 per cent of our farms in many of our counties (the samples sent in, that is, the fields that we have samples of) do not need further liming, that it is time to begin to put on the brakes on the lime program. We do not want to feel that we are wasting any Government money by paying or helping pay the cost of lime where it isn't needed. So that is the next step that we have taken.

Last year we took through PMA about twenty thousand samples from 4460 farms. Now, so far as our lime limitation works, we are not requiring that the farmer have us take his samples. We are not requiring that the Experiment Station do the analysis, although most of it is done that way. There are some fertilizer companies, some co-operatives, who are equipped to at least analyze for the need of lime, pH, and calcium, and if those people want to do that and farmers want to have it done that way, and the committee is satisfied that it is being done satisfactorily, that is acceptable too. That is, we are not tying the farmer down saying, "You have got to let us take those samples if you are going to have any lime," but we are saying that the farmer should furnish the county committee some proof that he needs lime on that field before we are willing to help pay the cost of that lime. That is the way that works.

Now, our summaries of our analyses show that our greatest need in Maine now is for potash.

Then, of course, as Mr. Ayers said, we need a program that will fit everybody. We need practices that will meet the problems that our farmers face, and many of our farmers may be up on lime, may be up on superphosphate and potash, but there may be other things like reforestation and drainage that we need to do for them.

Now another step we have just taken in Maine -- in Aroostook County we have a serious erosion problem. They farm on a lot of long slopes, slopes a mile long in some cases, in large fields, and those farmers like to plant their potatoes up and down those rows -- they always did and many of them like to stick to it -- and when you have a good smart shower there in July and August, it would just amaze you to see the amount of soil that comes down those potato rows and right out some times, right on the highway or into the streams.

We have this year under our program, as most of you know, an opportunity to work with S.C.S., to use some of our funds to help the S.C.S. organization carry out some of their erosion control practices. We have just completed an agreement in Maine with S.C.S. in Aroostook County, so that we are going to use some of our funds there in conjunction with them. They furnish the

technical assistance and we furnish the money to help the farmer carry out his part of the work. We are limiting the thing entirely to erosion control and drainage practices, and we are going to try it out. It is more or less a trial thing, but we feel that we have got to tackle these projects, and if it means a joint effort of two agencies, three agencies, or four agencies, all right, but let's get together and do it, not leave it just undone.

I have covered the most of the points in this thing, but I want to go back just a little bit over our part in that soil testing service. To take the sample, as I said, and Mr. Wyman in the Extension Service, who finally reads the results, emphasized to me the other day, that that is by far the most important part of the project if the job is going to be any good, because if the samples are not taken carefully, if the different parts of the field are not carefully separated, because you have in New England often three or four kinds of soil in one field, and I suppose that is true in Vermont as well as in Maine, especially on your rolling country, a sample is just no good unless it is taken right and unless the history is made out right. If the samples are not made out right, they can catch it very quickly in the laboratory. They have tested so many they can tell that the sample isn't done right, and we generally are asked to explain what is the matter. Now we sometimes feel that our committeeman out there taking samples has tried to hurry the job and didn't cut his field up and down, and we have had to be pretty careful on that. I want to emphasize that point, because the whole thing breaks down if the first part of the job that we do is not done right.

I don't know where we are going on this thing after these State Committee meetings, and State Conferences. I believe there is a conference in Washington, and I understand I have been asked to go down there as a representative of you people in the northeast and discuss this conservation. I am always quite confused when I am in Washington. In fact, it seems to me that everybody is confused down there even more than I am. I don't know whether we are at a disagreement with each other, whether we differ, or whether we are looking at the problem from a different way.

I am reminded some of the fellow in the insane asylum. Looked out through the bars and a farmer went by with a load of manure on a manure spreader. The fellow looked out and he said, "Well, what are you going to do with that?" The farmer said, "I'm going to put it on my strawberries." Well he looked at him a minute and he said, "Huh! I put cream on mine and they think I'm crazy."

I don't know who's crazy. I don't know which one should be behind the bars, but I think we have got to get together and decide just what we want to do, what our objectives are in this conservation job. Certainly it isn't up to us to say how much money we should have. Congress does that, and the taxpayer pays the bill, but once the money is there and is approved to the states, we do have an obligation to see that that money is spent the way that Congress intended it to be spent, of course the way the taxpayer wants it spent, and above all do the job for agriculture that it is supposed to do. And I think probably that in these states here if we can satisfy ourselves, maybe that is more important than trying to satisfy anybody else.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

TALK GIVEN BY

ARTHUR H. PACKARD

at the

VERMONT PMA STATE CONFERENCE, APRIL 28, 1950

Mr. Chairman and friends, my good friend has just told me that I have to stand reasonably near this microphone. I am not used to such things as that, and if it should explode, we should be prepared for what might happen.

I take quite a lot of pleasure here in speaking to your group this morning, because I well remember back to the time when we didn't have any program of ACP in Vermont. At that time there are many right here in the room this morning that remember the same as I do.

My first remembrance of a real attempt at conservation is when the Extension Service went out in Vermont and tried through demonstrations to create a desire on the part of Vermont farmers for conservation. Now Joe Carrigan has said a good many times, "Can the farms of this nation pay for themselves every generation and also keep up a program of conservation, so that the next generation has as good a chance or perhaps a better chance than they had?" I think he is asking a real question. I somewhat question that, as I have seen so many generations that have tried to succeed, pay for their homes and pay for their farms, and some of them succeed in a nice way and others fail. Some of them failed because they were born the wrong time of the century. But as I go back in this picture of soil conservation, I can think of a certain Sunday afternoon a good many years ago, and I began farming in 1906 on an upland farm. It had plenty of stones, plenty of good soil, but a rather poor place for tractors and tractor plows, etc. And I remember on a Sunday afternoon that my uncle went out into the meadow with me, and it was about the first day of September, and we looked over the meadow, and he said to me, "What is the trouble here with your meadow?" He said, "I remember a good many years ago on this farm here, when around the first of September would come the aftermath, and it wasn't just one year -- it was every year, and when the cows were turned out onto the fall feed about the first of September, they had just all the good feed that they could eat from that until the snow came and it was time to put them into the barn." And he said this morning, he said, "Today you haven't got what looks to me like aftermath enough to take care of your cows for more than three or four days."

Now I think that that was true of farms all over the country. We had that condition. We could raise a good crop or two with fertilizer, but we didn't know what the trouble was with the land, and so I take my hat off to the Extension Service for going to work through research to find out what was wrong.

Right along at that same time, a few years later, I remember a man here in Vermont who began doing something that we are doing today, that the people said was crazy. The person was, I believe, down on the Essex-Westford road, and he had a large area of river bottom meadow -- a nice meadow. The farm is owned by a Mr. Lamere today, if anybody wants to look the farm up. He began every year buying commercial fertilizer as topdressing for that farm, and cutting himself an amount of hay and selling it. There were no pick-up balers in that day, so that his farm income wasn't quite as satisfactory as it would have been otherwise, but he began a practice of having confidence enough in that land so he made quite

an investment in fertilizer and would take his crop in hay and sell it, and that thing at that time was considered all wrong, and people predicted at that time that that man wouldn't last very long, that he couldn't do a thing like that and get by. Well there were a lot of other factors entered into it. He later went into the nursery business, but right there, at least, I think he did a pretty good job of that thing.

Now it was back in those days there when we began to find out things. We began to find out what lime would do, what fertilizer would do. We began to find out that we had been exploiters. We had been the worst exploiters in the whole world, and I don't think that anybody at that time realized that we were exploiters of the soil. I don't think that they realized we certainly just wouldn't do it indefinitely, but it did happen just the same. Well the time went on, and the Experiment Station began to look into these things, and they began to find the answers.

Now at that time we had whole towns in Vermont that were built up around the lumber industry, and we had been just as bad exploiting our timber as we had on soil. I remember that Joe Carrigan told me one time, he said, "My father moved into a little town and settled down there many years ago, and went in debt." I never was clear whether it was the town of Pittsford or Chittenden. I bet Arthur Davison could tell me. (It was Chittenden.) "It was a lumber area and they tried to pay for that farm by marketing that lumber and selling it, and they cut it clean. They didn't do anything towards reforestation. They just cut it clean. And when they had cut their entire forest stand of all its lumber resources," Joe said, "we thought then we must be farmers, because there was nothing else we could do." And they found themselves on probably a class 3 farm. Class 3 land is very poor land, and that was what was happening all over the country.

Now, two years ago, as I guess everyone of you knows, I was in Europe, and looked over European agriculture in six different countries. One of the things that I couldn't understand when I was over there was this: Why is it that they have timber over here, forests that could be the pride of any nation, and their countries are just generations and generations older than we are. I never was more impressed than I was with the forests in Belgium. Those forests run up six and eight and ten logs. That was the forest that sheltered their 42,000 hothouses where they grew their grapes. But those people, and the German people, and even France and all around there years ago had got the idea that if they were going to have resources in the future, they had got to have those acres growing timber. And they went at it, and when they took trees out, they provided ways of having more trees coming along. And I don't think, folks, that you and I, even though you know some particular wonderful section of Vermont here, where you have got great lumber, I don't believe that any of you have got a better stand than those people there in those countries, and as I remember Belgium, it stands out among all the rest.

Now I think that in conservation you have a lot to be proud of. I think that you people right here in this room and those that came before you have done a job in Vermont here that stands out as I visit people of other states and I find out what they hav. done, and I just feel that the job that you have done in the restoration of your soil resources, and I hope later on your forest resources, is outstanding.

You know our total area in Vermont is 5,937,000 acres. 18% of this is class 1 land, and 28% is class 2, and the remainder is forest and recreation, or it should be forest and recreation. Now sometimes I compare Vermont to Denmark. There are a lot of things similar between Vermont and Denmark. We haven't got a lot of great natural resources. We haven't got any great mines. We haven't got any large supplies of iron and copper. Sure, they have got a copper mine over there near Chelsea. But among those natural resources, some of those things we haven't got. But what have we got? We have got a State that can grow grass and trees probably second to nowhere. I think we are noted as being a great State, a State where climatic conditions of soil and moisture and everything else are just natural for grass to grow, and trees to grow, and we do have great stores of marble and granite. So we have got those things.

Now I find that in 1866 Denmark finished their war with Germany and were cut off from a lot of their best land, and they had a portion left to live on that wasn't particularly fertile soil. They didn't have particularly good forest, and they certainly didn't have rich mines, and so those people sat down and studied what they had and decided whether they could make a good place to live out of Denmark and out of the resources that they had; and I suppose that the people of that far off land put in more time and study studying their natural resources and how to make the best of them than perhaps any nation that we have ever seen. Today if you were to go over to Denmark it's true that you wouldn't find as good farms as you would find here in the United States. They had to use what they had. But you would find nearly everyone of them in Denmark that is in agriculture owns his farm. You will find that nearly everyone in Denmark has electricity. You won't find any wealthy people over there, but you will find very happy people. I think that Denmark stands out as one of the happiest nations. The people are one of the happiest groups of people that there are in Europe. Perhaps you say that they weren't deeply involved in either the first or second world war, and that is true, but another thing that I want to impress on you is that they made the most of what they had.

Now I think we have got more than Denmark. We have got just as good people. We have got more of a mixture among our races, but that don't hurt us any. We have got a lot of good land. We have got 18% of class 1 land. That is quite a lot of land, around a million acres, and, a little bit more than that, of class 2. We also have an immense amount of territory that can produce for us great forests, and we are gradually getting so that we are doing a fairly good job, but the work that I have seen the ACP do in the last few years here in taking the soil that we had and changing it over is one of the miracles of the age, as I see it.

It always interests me to take typical people and see what they say. Now I remember a chap by the name of Mike Sweeney -- he might have been a Frenchman but I think he was an Irishman -- and Mike Sweeney has gone to the Great Beyond now, but he was living in the age where he had seen his farm go from where it was a fairly fertile farm to a point where it just didn't do the things he thought it ought to do. And then one day the ACP Program came along, and he began to use the lime and super, and Mike said to me one time, he said, "It is one of the joys of my life to see this farm back doing what it used to do." He said, "It seems like childhood days to go out there and see the meadow covered with clover, covered with grass, and I got my pasture coming back the way it used to." He told me one time, he said, "I never can understand why it was

that that pasture that used to take care every year of the needs for pasture all at once began to change over into moss and brakes and almost everything that cows didn't want." He said, "I just can't understand it." And he said, "I was one of them that been pretty saving with my money," and he said he was one of them that first used a bulldozer and had this thing levelled off, "and after that thing was done, I began using lime and super," and he said "Today I have got a pasture better than it ever was when my father was here on the farm." His pasture was great. Now if that thing happened to Mike Sweeney, it is happening to thousands of Mike Sweeney's all over Vermont, and I think that that is a great thing. It is one of the encouraging things. The lifetime of each one of us is not too long. Perhaps when we are young it seems that we have got a long life before us, but it is not too long. It is not long enough to take and start a forest and finish it up to where it is marked with timber and realize what we have a right to take off from it. And so it is awfully important from a forest standpoint that we get projects started, forest projects in which those things reach over from one generation to another, where we are not thinking just of ourselves, but we are thinking of those that are coming after us.

It is a wonderful thing when you stop to think of what lime has done for land. Paul Miller has always told me. He said 5000 tons was the most that he could get the Vermont farmers to use. He would tell stories and he would get the county agents to put on demonstrations, but he said 5000 was the limit. I know that you folks now are up to 100,000, and I know that the Experiment Station says that if we are to keep the soil of Vermont the way we should, we need 400,000 tons of lime per year applied to our pastures and meadows. Now when we get up to 100,000 tons we are on our way. I think we are going to do a little better as time goes on, but the thing of it is, in spite of whether you like it or not, we are in competition. The farmers of Vermont just are in competition with the farmers of New Hampshire, the farmers of Massachusetts, and everywhere else in the cost of producing 100 lbs. of milk, and that farmer that sticks to the old-fashioned way of letting the soil take care of itself is soon going to be left far behind. It isn't going to be long before his children begin to complain, "Why can't we have the things that the neighbor's children have over here?" It is not very long before the whole family is going to ask that fellow what is wrong with our farm, and this conservation of soil, I believe, is the answer. Now, if we were to take and pick from our community one of the poorest farms that we can remember, and there isn't a one of you but what can pick out a farm in your community, where they have never done a good job on conservation, if we were all to follow the examples of those poor farmers, Vermont in a little while would be known as a poverty-stricken State, and each one of you can think of farms like that in your community. I can think of one farm that used to keep 35 cows, that through abuse has got down today to where the man has wintered 10 cows this winter and has had to buy feed to get through.

On the other hand, if you pick the best farms in your community, and set them up as a model, it means that Vermont with that type of farm is setting the example of what we can do in building an agriculture here.

Now I well remember the date when we started in our program, when lime was put out under different conditions than it is today, when people drove up and down the highways of Vermont and would see piles of lime, and all too many of

them that weren't used, and when you would see the paper on the bags in the wind -- it would get loose and would be waving in the wind -- and the folks would say what in the deuce is the use of putting lime out to farmers and having it sit in a pile like this. Well, I want to congratulate you people on having worked out a plan where you get enough ownership of that lime into the hands of the farmer himself so that the farmer is not going to waste his own substance. In the last few years I haven't seen very many farmers that have been left in a position like that. You know that's a great thing.

Now as we move along let's be sure that you understand me in this. I think we owe a lot to our colleges for finding out what it was that was wrong with the farms. 40 years ago farmers knew something was very very wrong, but they didn't know what it was, and they haven't yet found out part of it anyway. We haven't found out all of it. If 50 years ago anybody had ever predicted what we were going to find out from 1900 to 1950, and if anybody had started in 1-2-3- the things that we would probably find out, the things that we would probably be doing, why that person would be put down as crazy. Now in the next 50 years, 1950 to 2000, don't think that progress is over. I think we will make greater progress in agriculture -- in all business -- but I think we will make greater progress in agriculture than we ever have before. I think we are going to find some wonderful things about our soil and about our land, and I am just simply telling you that I believe those things we find out are not going to push Vermont off the map either. I believe you are going to find out that we will use the resources we have got here working with the ACP, that we are going to do a job that is second to no one.

Now where do we go from here? Today farm magazines all over the country are saying "What are we going to do with surpluses?" -- referring to the stockpiles of wheat and corn and cotton and dried milk and eggs and many other things. What are we going to do with those? Are those going to be a calamity or a blessing? Well, temporarily, folks, it seems as though we were under a cloud, doesn't it? It seems as though a cloud had come over the sky when we see our amount of stockpiles of things increase, and we don't seem to see the evidence of their moving off into consumption. But let me tell you this. Farm prices, as near as I can make out, have gone down 20% in the last two years, some commodities more than that, some of them less, but I think if you will take the commodity you grow and figure it out, I think you will find that it is down 20% at least. And what about the things that you buy? A few of those things you will find are down a little, but most of the things you find are just exactly the same, and some of them will cost us more. That right? Some of them will cost you more. And so you will find farmers all over the country. They are saying "How much longer can this thing go on? How much longer can the things I have got keep going down and the things that I need stay right up here, fixed and sticky? What are we going to do about it?"

Well, I think there is an answer. Of course, I have always been a nut on this thing as far as that is concerned anyway. I think that a monetary and fiscal policy that reaches the average of our prices right here in the middle instead of way up here at the top or way down here at the bottom is what we need. I think either one of those two is wrong. I think we are too smart a people to be going through this matter of booms and busts. You know why? Well, I

think the people of this country have shown in the past that they are just as smart or smarter than people of other countries, than Russia. Now Russia says that they have no problem of unemployment, that they can employ people, that they won't have any depression, but they have got a lot of other things that they do not say a word about, which we have that are great advantages in democracies. And I think if we want to make the soil so thin, here I am speaking figuratively, that the communist movement can't grow, one of the things we want to do is to keep the price relationship between farmers and others so they can exchange goods and services. Now you stop to think about it we have come to the point where we used to be half farmers or more, and we have come now to where some say we are 1/6 and some say we are 1/7. It would be hard for us to count them this morning to find out just which we are. But we have got down to where 1/6 or 1/7 of the people of this country can produce the food for the Nation, all the food they need. In fact, we have piled up so much in the last four or five years that nobody would ever have believed it, and that leaves the other six out of every seven people to do the other things that we need -- such as doctors, nurses, storekeepers, or those others that we need to increase the standard of living so it makes you proud that we are a nation that has the best standard of living in the world. 7% of the people of the world are producing 42% of the world's goods and services. We are mighty proud of that.

But I want to tell you this, folks.. We can't keep going on this boom and bust idea. Perhaps somebody would have said that 50 years ago, but I want to tell you it's truer today. When a nation gets a debt of 254 billion dollars, if that nation ever defaults on that debt, what good are your life insurance policies? What good are your bank accounts? The people are not going to let that thing happen, and this nation can't pay their debts on a low level. Did you ever think what happens to agriculture when we begin to get into this period like what we are in today? This is the question that I would like to leave with you folks who are seriously considering this matter of conservation of the soil.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

TALK GIVEN BY

ROBERT SINCLAIR, COUNTY AGENT
FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY

at the

VERMONT PMA STATE CONFERENCE, APRIL 28, 1950

"MY OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEEMAN'S JOB"

I am in what might be described as an enviable position, in that I have been asked to tell you what I feel your job is. It is always easier to do that than tell what your own job is. It is also easier to tell how you think someone else is doing his job than to give an evaluation of your own. It is probably because self-criticism comes so hard that your program committee asked an impartial outsider to talk on this subject. Or again, they might have felt that in the words of the old saying, "confession is good for the soul," and an ex-officio member of the committee might be in a better position to go through with this trying ordeal.

It is, however, somewhat difficult for me to talk on this subject with the three members of the Washington County PMA Committee in the audience. We do get along quite well together, and to assure that we continue to do so in the future, it might be well for me to preface these remarks with a quotation from the literary field -- "all characters in this talk are entirely fictitious, and any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental."

Before getting into the actual job of the committeeman, it might be well to attempt to answer a question often asked when people start talking of programs such as PMA and more particularly ACP. That question is, "Is the committeeman system the most efficient, the most economical, and the most desirable way of getting the particular work done?" I have heard this question asked many times, and argued thoroughly, both for and against the committeeman system. No doubt you have as well. It would be presumptive, and entirely unnecessary for me to go over any of these arguments, or attempt to reach any definite answer to that one. In fact, such arguments are entirely superfluous, for, no matter whether we believe the farmer-committeeman system is desirable or not, it is apparently the way the people want the job done. Let me quote one or two sentences from Report #885 of the 80th Congress by the Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture and Forestry headed by George Fiken, on Long Range Agricultural Policy and Program:

"FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS SHOULD ENCOURAGE AND DEVELOP FULL FARMER PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND ADMINISTERING PRODUCTION OPERATIONS, MARKETING PROGRAMS, AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES.

"Long-term agricultural policies and programs to effectuate these policies must develop farmer support on a broad basis if they are to accomplish marked and permanent improvement in local farming conditions. This support can be obtained best through active participation of farmers at the local level in the development and administration of all phases of publicly sponsored programs for the benefit of agriculture.

"Local faith in a program is essential if it is to command the support of the most substantial citizens of the community. Also, local support of a program requires that operating farmers have an effective voice in program planning and in program administration."

This committee held hearings all over the country, before releasing the report.

This would seem to answer once and for all the question of whether we should have our present committeeman system. The people testifying at these hearings had great faith in the committeeman system; it is the duty of each of us here in this room to see that that faith is justified.

The title of this talk it seems to me leads to two lines of thinking: first, what is the job of the committeeman, and secondly, is he doing that job as well as it should be done. Before preparing this talk, I wrote to the other thirteen county agents in the state for their observations on what the committeeman's job is, and how they feel he is doing it. I received several replies, and will try to incorporate their thinking as well as my own. I will however, take full blame for any repercussions on what I say. Also, my views are entirely of my own thinking -- and in no way construed to represent the overall views of the Extension Service in Vermont.

After looking up in our County Administrative Manual to find out what the U.S. Department of Agriculture feels is the committeeman's job, I was amazed to find that there are several pages telling what his responsibilities are. After reading them, I want to say that I am glad I don't have to lie awake at night wondering whether or not I had done all of the things that were expected of me if I were a committeeman. It almost made me glad I was a County Agent. To briefly enumerate a few of the things a committeeman must do, as set forth in the manual: "the county committee shall be generally responsible for carrying out in the county the agricultural conservation program, the price support programs, the marketing quota programs, the crop insurance programs, the sugar program..... and any other program assigned to it by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Congress." It's quite a job you have to do, and if certain proposed pieces of agricultural legislation are passed, you'll really be busy.

I don't believe that we should spend too much time discussing the committeeman's job in connection with marketing quotas, crop insurance, sugar program, or the other possible programs that may be handed to State, county and community committeemen by the Secretary of Agriculture. They are not, as yet, important to us in Vermont, and the ones with which we do have to deal are of great importance to us. One of these is price support.

This is one of the newer jobs thrown at committeemen in Vermont, and is, as far as I know handled primarily by State and county committeemen. It involves mainly price supports and acreage allotments on potatoes and price supports on eggs and milk. I believe that the major amount of action in connection with these programs, with the exception of potatoes, is handled by the State Office and the State Committeemen.

In connection with the potato program I would like to make one or two comments. I'd like to make a lot of them, in fact, but I guess that this is neither the time nor place.

As far as acreage allotments go, I feel that the committeemen in each county should make absolutely sure, by personal contact if necessary, that each grower understands the price support program and the reasons for and method of determining his goal. I personally feel that it is the duty of the PMA to have some informal contact with fertilizer dealers, and in the process, try and discourage these dealers from getting new potato growers in the county.

The livestock feeding program is -- well we won't try and describe it. It was unfortunate that this last winter, in our county at least, dairymen were told or came to understand that there would be almost unlimited supplies of potatoes for livestock feeding. Many of these dairymen, going on this information, developed a heavy potato feeding program. When, as happened two or three times, orders were held up for several weeks, many of these dairymen ran out of potatoes. Anyone who has fed potatoes knows what happens in a case like that. I don't know as the blame for this lies with the committeeman, or with anyone else for that matter, other than the government red tape. It did work quite a hardship on many of our dairymen. Perhaps if we all had been better informed of the program, this wouldn't have happened.

Without a doubt the agricultural conservation part of PMA is nearest and dearest to the hearts of most of us. It is the oldest of the many duties of the committeemen, and after you've been at something like that a long time you get a liking for it. It is also to my mind, far and away the most important part of the committeemen's job in Vermont. Give us our lime and superphosphate and cash payment for fertilizers and we can get along without the control necessary for price support. Take away our lime and super, and you have deprived the Vermont farmer of a very vital source of his productive ability. If the proposed changes in ACP are enacted, it will wipe out nearly all of the advances that we have made in the last fifteen years. You can argue until the cows come home that these are recurring practices, but when over a million dollars of government money, plus another million of farmer contribution are spent for conservation practices -- mainly lime, super and mixed fertilizer -- let me repeat that when, after over two million dollars' worth of conservation has been done, net farm receipts are just over \$1,000 according to Experiment Station studies, you tell me how much will be done and what net receipts will be if these so-called recurring practices are abolished in Vermont.

To get back to the committeeman's job in connection with ACP -- I sincerely believe -- and it doesn't say this anywhere in the manual that I could find -- I sincerely believe that the committeeman's main job in connection with ACP is to get the greatest possible amount of conservation that can be bought for every dollar entrusted to him. You'll note that I didn't say to spend every dollar allotted to your county. Sometimes I think we worry more about spending our whole allotment so that we don't turn any back to the State Office to go to another county than we do about buying conservation. And that is what you are doing -- for every dollar you spend you are trying to buy a dollar's worth of conservation. And in the process of buying, you also have to sell -- you have to sell the farmer on the idea that he needs your help -- that you have something to offer him.

Along with this goes the need to assist farmers to do only those practices that they would not otherwise do themselves. And here, I believe is where a little Yankee common sense is needed in Washington. We fully realize that we are paying a few farmers to carry out entirely practices that they would do ...

without government assistance. We also realize that we are paying a great many farmers for some work they would do without the assistance, but because we are able to help them, they can participate in the program and use more lime, more super and more mixed fertilizer and other practices than they would otherwise do if the whole burden of these conservation practices were on their shoulders. We know too, that there are many farmers who would participate in the program, but who feel they haven't the money to do so. I personally feel that we are getting a good share of the dollar's worth of conservation. We may not be doing the best that we can on the score of the recurring practices, but until someone in Washington comes up with a plan for deciding on just how much lime a farmer would buy without government assistance I say we'd better stick with our present plan. With a falling price level, and decreasing farmers' incomes, the plans so far advanced for determining this factor are not the right ones.

I throw all this in because I believe that deciding this is going to be a part of the committeeman's job.

I said that the first thing that the committeeman is charged with is getting the most conservation possible for every dollar spent. The second one was to spend as much of this money as possible in buying new conservation practices -- practices that would not otherwise be done without government assistance.

A third important part of the job is selling the program to the farmer. There aren't too many farmers left in the state like the one in East Montpelier, who for a good many years wouldn't use any of that "damn democratic lime." There are, unfortunately, still many farmers who feel that lime is a waste of money -- that they can still farm the "cow manure" way. There are also other farmers who feel that they cannot afford to buy lime and fertilizer. We know that they can't afford not to. But how to sell them on the program? That is in part the committeeman's job.

I believe there is an opportunity to cooperate with local banks and production credit associations in getting the job done. We have done this in Washington County in several instances, and a few of our banks are most anxious to help, particularly with those farms on which they have loans.

As an instance, not too long ago the farm loan officer of one of our banks came to my office and asked me to go and visit a farm with him and work out a plan for full use of conservation materials with the farmer.

We visited the farm, went over the land and worked out what we considered to be the necessary amounts of fertilizers and lime. The bank was willing to suspend for a year principal payments on the mortgage, and lend the farmer up to \$500 for conservation materials, on a one year amortized note. The farmer had bought hay most of the winter, and the bank realized that fertilizer and lime were cheaper than hay.

We worked out with the farmer the best way in which he could use the \$500. We went away feeling we had sold him on a progressive program.

Two days later he called the bank and said he guessed he wouldn't use the \$500 after all. He didn't want to go into debt any deeper. This, to my mind was penny wise and pound foolish.

Here was a case where we had the means, the need, but the farmer lacked the desire. I don't know the answer, but if he buys hay for a couple more winters he may see the logic in our argument.

In the words of Mr. Ayers -- you have the means, you must convince the farmer of his needs and the know how.

A fourth part of the committeeman's job is to see that the administrative expense in running the program is also buying conservation. I am not necessarily talking of economizing. I would not feel too badly if the administrative budgets were doubled, if two and one-half times as much conservation could be the result. Sometimes I think we stress this point too much -- keep county committeemen's expenses down, keep sign-up costs down, don't have a two-day sign-up, it will cost too much money. And then when the county committee meets, how often do they spend at least half a day reviewing material from the State Office? And how often is that material not particularly pertinent to the conservation job? I am not saying that a broad knowledge of what is going on in Congress, in other departments of PMA etc., is not important to the committeeman. I do feel, however, that a lot of that information could and should be digested at home. Some of it, to be perfectly frank, I feel may have no place being discussed at a PMA county committee meeting.

I did a little figuring the other day, and in Washington County last year it cost around \$1.00 of administrative expense to buy \$11. of conservation. I do not feel that this is an excessive administrative expense -- perhaps under the committeeman system it is not enough. The main job is to do a good job of sign-up and check-up, a good job of administration; not to see how cheaply it can be done.

There are certain qualifications that it seems to me every committeeman, both county and community should have. First, and very important, he should be a good farmer himself -- and one who has the time to put into the job to be done. We have had some good farmers on our committee in Washington County, but often they could not spare the time that the job required, and their efficiency as committeemen was impaired. Farmers respect and listen to good farmers. They will also follow their advice. I believe that on the whole our county committeemen, at least the ones that I know very well, are good farmers. I wish I could say the same about our community committeemen. Too many of them are not good farmers, and not good salesmen. In fact, they aren't sold themselves. Too often a community committeeman is elected because he is the only one who wants the job, or he might be the only one who had time to do it. If this program is to be run by committeemen, and to do the kind of job that is expected of it, the quality of community committeemen must improve. Knowing your county is important -- you have to if you are to guide thinking in planning a program. A committeeman must know the program, not only the mechanics of it, but the ways in which it is justifiable, and how to defend it from attack. He should also be watching for ways and means to demonstrate the effectiveness of it -- though not to the point of being a fanatic or a pest.

A good committeeman should also have the ability to reason through a problem, and without jumping to hasty and erroneous decisions, arrive at a decision and then when he has reached that decision, the will to stick by his convictions.

He should have the willingness to cooperate with other agencies in the county. A great deal of assistance is given to ACP by SCS, the Forest Service and Extension, and vice versa. County and community committeemen should be, and I believe in most cases probably are, willing to help out these other agencies in their programs, even though some of it might have to be work without pay. Although workers in SCS, Forestry and Extension are paid regardless of whether they are working on ACP projects or on their own programs, work done for ACP interrupts the regular program of each cooperating agency. There is also an excellent opportunity for committeemen to pass on to these other agencies the needs of farmers -- send information up -- as well as down. And although we all get along together in a passive sort of way, I feel that there is a chance for a lot more active cooperation -- looking at the picture from the good of the farmer rather than from the promotion of our own particular agency. We are all guilty of this, but we can hope for more active cooperation. The field of farm planning offers an excellent opportunity.

To review, if you, as a committeeman, meet all of the qualifications I have suggested, and are perfectly frank in your self-analysis, then, I congratulate you. If you can say that your county is buying a dollar's worth of conservation for every dollar you spend, either program funds or administrative; if you are encouraging a good percentage of your farmers to carry out conservation practices that they would not do without government assistance, or at least in excess of what they would do without assistance; and if you are contacting and selling every farmer in your county that it is possible to sell, then I salute you, and I apologize for wasting your time. If you can walk down Main Street and meet your friends and neighbors and look them in the eye and tell them that every dollar entrusted to you is working to capacity for each one of us, then I say to you -- "you have done a swell job." If you can't, then I hope I have given you something to think about for next year.

Thank you.

TALK GIVEN BY

ROGER WHITCOMB, COUNTY AGENT
FOR ORLEANS COUNTY

at the

VERMONT PMA STATE CONFERENCE, APRIL 28, 1950

Mr. Chairman and folks of Vermont PMA, I am very glad to be here and discuss with you for a few minutes "Some Agricultural Conservation Gains In Orleans County."

We have some understanding today of fertilizer, of lime, what it will do and how it works. There was, however, a great lack of understanding in the early years of conservation work, particularly of soils, soil types, and some of the soil practices. When you speak of soil types I can best illustrate that by a story that Paul Miller got across up there in Orleans County once upon a time.

Paul took a group of ACP committeemen on a little tour to look at soil types, and we stopped by the roadside, you know, where there was a cut in the bank and you could see the soil. It was what an agronomist would call a "soil profile."

He stopped and we got out of the car, and he didn't talk about soil right off, but looked across the hillside where there were some cows grazing. "Well boys," he said, "what are those things over there? What are they?" Some of the men said, "Why, they're cows, of course." "All right," said Paul, "what kind of cows are they?" "Well, there's Jerseys, some Holsteins, maybe a little Guernsey and Holstein mixed or something else," said some of the men. "Fine," said Paul, "that's good. Not everybody could do that by just looking off and telling what kind of cows they were at such a distance."

Then he pointed to the bank and said, "What's that?" Someone said, "Why, that's dirt." "No, it isn't dirt; it's soil. What kind of soil is it?" Nobody knew. "For gosh sakes," said Paul, "that's where you get your living, that's where everything you do comes from, and you don't even know what you've got?" Then he started off on soils.

Well, maybe we still don't know all about soil types, but I guess we do have a little better understanding of soils than we did 15 years ago. Back then, I think we had one of those three things Mr. Ayers mentioned yesterday, because probably everybody had the desire to do something about it. But they certainly lacked the means, and I imagine to some extent the know how. They had, of course, some know how, but perhaps not as good as now.

As to practices when this ACP program came along up there, well, I'm not going to review them now, because we had the same ones everybody else had, with the exception, maybe, of a few special ones that some of you fellows have had, and, you know, and we all know, the same as everywhere else in Vermont our program up there was principally one of materials -- lime, super and mixed fertilizer -- and we used a whale of a lot of it over the years and here's where these cold impersonal figures come into play, but I like 'em. We used around 83,000 tons

of lime up there, and that's quite a pile. We've used 35,000 tons of super, and we've used around 3500 tons of 0-20-20, and on a per-farm basis that means around 57 tons of lime, around 24 tons of super and around $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons of 0-20-20. Those are still cold figures. But you've got to kind of let them sink in, and you've got to think what those figures mean in terms of each farmer along down the road and remember that that isn't all that's been used. Now I'm getting into this result business, of what this stuff has done for us. I think the first, maybe, and most important and most noticeable to everybody, if they get the figures, is on our livestock numbers and it's the same in all our counties, as you know. I don't know as I told you in the beginning, but in the mid-thirties we kept around 42,000 head of livestock (dairy cattle), and now we keep somewhere around 50 to 52 thousand head. Well the feed had to come from some place and it didn't all come from across the border in Canada, although it would look it this year to see all the trucks coming through. Those same cows are producing today considerably more than then, because the best figures we have show our production was around 4800 to 5000 pounds per cow, and today we are producing around 5800 pounds per cow. Well now, obviously that increased production didn't all come from the ACP program. I know that. But, what is it that some good dairyman has said, that 70% of the breeding of the cow went in at the mouth, and I think a lot of the people agree that quite a lot of it does. The roughage has been improved by that fertilizer, and from that you have been able to step up the production for dairy cows, along with other practices and the help of the price level which enabled you to feed more grain. The pH of our soils up there has been built up; you know that. It has everywhere. That's one thing that has piled up on us.

Our soil tests now (coming back to soil) show still a need of lime but are much better than they were 15 years ago. Our understanding of soils and crops and fertilization is considerably greater than 15 years ago. Just last week a fellow came in from one of our towns and he was talking about a piece of land that he had broken up that hadn't been farmed or anything done to it for years, kind of light land. Well, he wanted to know about it and some of the things he ought to do. First off he said he already had some fertilizer coming and was putting on half a ton to the acre. Well, 15 years ago I wonder what you would have said if somebody had walked in and said that he was going to put on half a ton of fertilizer to the acre. I just don't think they would have said it. Maybe that isn't good practice today, but the best authorities think it is, and they think you'll get your money back. Well, apparently somebody has done a good job of education, if here's a fellow who just volunteers that's what he's going to put on. And he isn't an isolated case, either. Your roughage programs are so much improved from what they were 15 years ago, and that is all in the educational program that has come along in part from ACP.

Another result that perhaps we don't think of as much as maybe we should, but I think it's mighty important, is the awareness of soil conservation by the general public, other than farmers. I don't think that 15 years ago they were thinking about it very much, but certainly they are today, either favorably or unfavorably, and if they think, that's something, and a lot of them are thinking about soil conservation, and have a much better understanding of it.

And the development of leadership over these last 15 years, that's old stuff to you, you've heard that said and re-said many many times, but it can't be said too many times. You people right here, you maybe wouldn't all be here,

you know, and you might not be all having the positions in your communities that you have were it not for the ACP program. You're doing a whale of a lot of good and you've got a lot more committeemen at home that are too. I think the program should take a great deal of pride in the development of that leadership because they go on, not just leaders in ACP, but they are leaders in their community and in other things. Maybe they wouldn't have developed and spread out as they have had it not been for the ACP program. That's one of those intangible things you can't measure, but, boy, don't ever forget it, because it's there and it's a very important benefit.

To really get down to meaning something, when you go home and think about any gains, I think you've kind of got to think about individual farms because there you can see, and every county's got them. You're always asked, or frequently asked, what farms you've got in your county that have done an outstandingly good job of conservation, and you don't have too much trouble finding them. Arthur Packard spoke of Mike Sweeney, the Irishman, and it makes me think of an Irishman that we had up there who has since passed on. Many of you know Dan Dyer in Essex Junction; his father was Peter Dyer up in Lowell. Any of you who knew Peter, knew that he had quite a lot of humor and a lot of knowledge in his head. Well, Peter lived in a place that was just going down, down, down. In fact, when I was up there one time, he pointed out to me and said, "Roger, look up on the hillside, that used to be a farm once, it supported a good family and so did this one, and this one." And he said, "Right over there on that piece," (of course, being an Irishman, he had a vivid memory of some things, you know), and he said, "that particular piece there, the day that Corbett licked Sullivan my father and I got in the hay on that piece." And he said, "Last year my son and I cut pulp off that piece." He had seen the transition of farms going and going and he was right on the border, because he was next, and that was in the mid-thirties. But Peter used the program and saved his farm.

And there are many many individual cases like that. We have a man by the name of Pion up there in Westfield, and I can remember well the day that Senator Aiken came up there to that farm with Harris Soule. It was producing pretty well then, but I wish they could come back and see what he's doing today. He's used lime and lime and lime, and super and the bulldozer practice, as we call it, to very good advantage. He has done a good job. Well, I could go on but I'm not going to.

I think one thing that we should remember -- this is an ACP meeting, and ACP should take a large part of credit, I know. We should never forget, however, that there's a lot of people interested in this business of conservation. We shouldn't forget, and I'm not thinking now of just other agencies, we've got the SCS, and we've got the county agents, etc., but we've also got Ag teachers and we've got GI instructors; we've got feed dealers; we've got seed dealers; we've got fertilizer dealers; we've got many different groups of people that are now interested in these things and we can't measure what they've done to help on this conservation program, but you all know they've done quite a lot. I don't think we should ever be unmindful of that. I think I might wind up by mentioning that we've gained a lot in there, but I don't think I ought to end by saying we've just gained a lot, period. We've got a whale of a long ways to go yet, too. Maybe we're just getting started. As Arthur said, as far as the first fifty years of this century are concerned, and the next fifty

we don't know what it's going to be, but perhaps we've just got started.

We still haven't sold a lot of farmers on the value of fertilizer and lime. That's my opinion, anyway, because I just know as well as anything if this material program stopped tomorrow, we wouldn't be using anywhere near what we are using now. Now, there's some inconsistency someplace. I don't know just where it is, but I say it, I know you fellows say it, agronomists say it. If you spend a dollar for fertilizer you get your money back and more too, but I mean it's a good thing to do. It's a sound investment, and so why shouldn't everybody just automatically do it, but they won't and you know it. So we've still got quite an educational job to do there, I think, and I don't think that we are reaching all of the farmers as effectively as we should reach them. That's been brought out before today, but you know up in our county we like to brag. We're a little cocky, I suppose. Everybody maybe is about their own. We work together, I think, very, very well in the county, maybe because we go fishing together all of us, all the various agencies. We have a fine time fishing. We catch some fish, and we get along very nicely, and we work together well, but because of the organizational setups, I still think we just can't do the job we ought to do for farmers, and I'm not just alone in thinking that. The farm people up there say it, and it just seems sort of tragic that it has to be that way. To me that's something that we've still got yet to achieve, a little bit better actual coordination of our work. We get along fine, but I think we'd do a little more effective job if things were perhaps a little bit different.

You've been awful patient. I know farmers are patient anyway, and maybe some of you are a little bit numbed from yesterday's labors, so thanks a lot, folks, for listening.

TALK GIVEN BY
ALTON BEST, S.C.S. DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST
at the
VERMONT PMA STATE CONFERENCE, APRIL 28, 1950

"PMA COOPERATION AT THE COUNTY LEVEL"

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I'd better identify myself a little bit first. I'm connected with the Poultney Work Group. The Poultney Work Group covers the Bennington County SCS district with headquarters at Manchester Center, Vt., also the Poultney-Mettawee district with headquarters in Poultney, and the Otter Creek district with headquarters in Rutland and Middlebury.

Now, whoever is here from Bennington County, I hope they will take no offense, nor feel that I'm neglecting the county if I pass over it with just a few words. The Bennington County district is comparatively new. It's been in operation just a couple of years. There's only a few over a hundred cooperators with the district. There have not been too many requests for these cash practices for prior approval. I believe this year there have been around 35 or 36, which it appears that the SCS personnel in Bennington County will be able to take care of very nicely.

In Rutland the situation is quite a lot different. The Poultney-Mettawee district is, of course, the oldest district in the State, organized in 1941. Most of the farmers in the district are farmers that have going concerns for farms, are cooperators with the district and have conservation plans for their farms which are in effect. Now this fact has enabled the SCS personnel so far this year to process 120 requests for prior approval, which is quite a lot. Now the reason they were able to do this is because quite a few of those practices had already been planned in the farm plans, and the boys didn't even have to go out in the field to approve them. There has been an awful lot of conservation work done in Rutland County and there is still an awful lot left to do, of course, and cooperation in Rutland County has certainly been splendid.

For one thing, the late Harm Sheldon was on the board of supervisors in the Poultney-Mettawee district ever since the district started. Also he was on the PMA County Committee for quite a number of years, I believe. So the SCS personnel in the county and also the district supervisors knew at all times what the program of the PMA was in the county. I am very sure that the PMA personnel knew what was going on in the district.

Now the way that is handled in Rutland County, I believe, is substantially the same as it is handled in all counties. Things work out so well that from the Rutland County secretary there is a constant flow of requests over to the Poultney headquarters, sometimes individually and sometimes in batches. These are processed by the boys and returned with practically no exchange of correspondence. At the end of the year there is always sort of a little bit of an evening-up period, when there are a few farmers that complain that they had a little more work done than was reported, and, oddly enough, there are also a few that complain less than they were given credit for. Well, these are handled very nicely around the table in Rutland. The PMA County Committee invites our boys over and that matter is all taken care of in about an hour.

During the last few years SCS personnel have been invited to attend your program and training committee meetings in Rutland County, and I must say that the cooperation in that county has left very little to be desired.

Now, in Addison County things again are quite a lot different. From the standpoint of cooperation things are just as splendid as they are in Rutland County, but from the standpoint of the work load there's a vast difference. In 1948 in Addison County we had 33 requests for prior approval. Well, apparently those were handled all right, because I heard very little about them. In 1949 that jumped up to 274 requests and the SCS personnel were not able to handle all of them, and there were a few complaints. A few of the farmers damned PMA, and a few of them damned SCS, but apparently it was nobody's fault. They just couldn't get over them all. And now in 1950 something either caught fire in Addison County, or somebody set fire to it, because there's 248 requests for prior approval. Now I might just mention that 91 of these are for drainage ditches involving pretty close to 25 miles, 23 of them are for diversion ditches involving about 20 miles, 46 requests are for your new pond practice, and 88 requests involving 547 acres are for pasture clearing. That is really a man-sized job. It became apparent quite early that SCS personnel were not going to be able to take care of that at all, especially on non-cooperators with the district, and those that had put in their requests, to say nothing about the ones that were already cooperators.

With such a heavy work load it has thus been necessary for SCS and the Addison County PMA Committee to work toward some plan of handling prior approval work in the county. It is also with this in mind that a cooperative plan for use of funds between the two agencies has been receiving considerable attention, and we feel it will work toward a better result for both.

And so, folks, in the few minutes at my disposal, I have tried to bring to you the overall picture of how our two agencies work together in the area I serve.

Thank you.

PMA STATE CONFERENCE
Burlington, Vermont
April 27 and 28, 1950

PROGRAM PLANNING

The Committee on Program Planning offers the following recommendations to the conference concerning the 1951 Agricultural Conservation Program:

A. Amount of Assistance Available for Each County. We recommend that funds be allocated to Vermont counties on the same basis as was used in 1950, that is, 1/3 weight to total cropland, 1/3 weight to total animal units, and 1/3 weight to total participation.

We believe that further study should be made of the advisability of different methods of allocating funds, but until additional evidence proves otherwise, we think the present system is sound.

B. Amount of Assistance Available for Each Farm.

1. The amount of assistance to be made available for each farm should be left up to the county ^{and community} committees involved. However, we urge that steps be taken to assure that committeemen will do a more thorough job with their farm visit when at the farm. We further urge that counties explore the possibility of using soil tests as a better method of determining the needs of minerals, and that individual counties study the advisability of allocating program funds to farms based on conservation needs.

We do not feel at this time that it would be desirable to break down the county allocation of program funds to the community level. However, if any county wishes to try this plan, it should be left optional with them.

2. The present system of approving and notifying farmers of the amount of assistance for cash practices is considered satisfactory. The group feels that counties should make every effort to get the notice to the farmer out to him as early as possible. We suggest that counties consider the possibility of working out a system of checking on the use being made of these allowances held for farms. This job might be done in conjunction with the county agent.

3. We recommend that counties make a further study of the type of a special program being carried out in Chittenden County, and that some type of a long-range conservation program for each farm (for use as a guide in selecting practices) be a program requirement as soon as practicable.

C. Program Year. This committee favors the present basis of having the program year the same as the calendar year, provided the present provision which allows a farmer to carry out practices starting October 1 for the following year is adopted.

D. General Policies.

1. We believe that in order to get the amounts of lime, superphosphate, and potash used in Vermont that are needed, assistance similar to that offered under our present Agricultural Conservation Program is essential. We think that we should continue to ask the farmer to bear a fair share of the cost of using these materials, and that we should take steps to see that these materials are

D. General Policies (cont.).

used where they are needed. Administrative gadgets such as those offered in PMA Memorandum - 121, Supplement 1, in regard to the use of these materials, are not workable. We believe the approach in Vermont of having the farmer pay at least half of the cost is the correct method of approaching the problem of getting the most for the conservation dollar appropriated by Congress.

2. We do not favor the addition of nitrogen to the list of eligible practices.

E. Conservation Materials.

1. This committee recommends a continuation of the furnishing of conservation materials as in 1950. We believe, however, that any county desiring to do so should be given an opportunity to try out the Purchase Order Plan.

2. Kind of Material. The kind of material and services to be furnished in the county should be determined by the individual counties. We believe that the following types should be made available in Vermont:

a. Furnishing lime - bagged farmyard, bagged siding, bulk and bulkspread.

b. Furnishing superphosphate, bagged, at the siding.

as 0-20-20. c. Furnishing superphosphate and potash in combination, such

d. Forest trees.

e. Tree planting service.

f. Stand improvement service.

g. Soil sampling service.

3. The committee believes that the policy as to whether or not a uniform cash collection for the State should be set for materials should be determined by evidence made available to the State Committee.

They believe that the following collections should apply to materials furnished:

a. Superphosphate - 50% of the cost.

b. Ground limestone - same as last year. (50% of the cost of bagged farmyard delivered)

c. 0-20-20 - 60% of the cost.

4. The committee has the following to offer under methods of improving the Conservation Materials Program:

a. We should continue our effort to get early delivery of materials.

E. Conservation Materials (cont.).

b. The group opposed the furnishing of mixed fertilizer containing nitrogen.

c. We recommend that a method be worked out whereby conservation materials may be furnished in lieu of a small payment increase.

5. In discussing the amount of the small payment increase, the group opposed any change at the present time.

F. Approved Practices and Rates of Payment.

1. Lime. Description for lime should be continued as in 1950.

2. Superphosphate. In order to assure that better use will be made of superphosphate used in the gutter, the committee recommends that payment for superphosphate mixed with manure be restricted to those farms using a rotation in which at least 75% of the cropland is devoted to conserving crops.

3. Mixed fertilizers. Continue as in 1950.

4. Boron. Continue as in 1950.

5. Mulching. Continue as in 1950.

6. Planting Forest Trees. Continue as in 1950.

7. Improving Woodland. The group felt that we should not pay for harvest cutting and that the practice should be re-worded to make this change.

8. Construction of Fences. Continue as in 1950.

9. Clearing Land for Permanent Pasture or Hay. Continue as in 1950.

10. Construction of Open Drainage Ditches. Continue as in 1950.

11. Tile Drainage. Continue as in 1950.

12. Construction of Diversion Ditches. Continue as in 1950.

13. Construction of Riprap. Continue as in 1950.

14. Local Conservation Practice. Continue as in 1950.

15. Special County Practice. Continue as in 1950.

New Practices

The committee recommends that a practice for the construction of farm ponds be included in the 1951 State Handbook.

The Windham County group presented a practice for the development of sugar orchards. A copy is attached to this recommendation. The committee recommends that Windham County be given an opportunity to try this practice.

G. Form of Presentation. The committee recommends that each county be authorized to present its own Practice Bulletin in the type it chooses.

Members of Conference Committee

Thomas F. Macauley, Chairman
E. K. Wright, Vice Chairman
A. F. Heald, Secretary

Wayne C. Fuller	Addison
E. W. Mattison	Bennington
J. W. Williams	Chittenden
Sylvanus Thurston	Essex
Stuart A. Newton	Franklin
Ernest G. Prairie	Grand Isle
Lawrence E. Gregory	Lamoille
Glen A. Button	Orange
Herbert Rollins (For Clyde Vance)	Orleans
A. Dean Sumner	Rutland

Note:

The foregoing report is based on conference committee recommendations but covers changes adopted by the general conference.

Development of Sugar Orchards

Since the beginning of the maple sugar industry very little has been done to increase the productivity of maple sugar trees. With few exceptions sugar makers have taken their orchards as they developed naturally. Except for the removal of non-maple and a little thinning most sugar orchards receive very little care or attention. The result of this has been far less syrup in relation to the number of buckets hung than could be realized.

The development of sugar trees with large healthy crowns, located to insure quick and easy gathering should do much to increase the efficiency of sugar operations and to lower the cost of production of high-grade maple products.

Therefore we, of the Windham County PMA Committee, feel that there should be a special practice to help pay the cost of developing better sugar orchards. We recommend that the following special practice be instituted in the State of Vermont:

Practice No. Development of Sugar Orchards

Payment shall be made for the development or improvement of a young sugar orchard. In order to qualify for this payment an owner must carry out all the following operations which may apply to his particular sugar lot.

The area to be included must be defined either on the ground or on a map so that it may be located in future times.

All softwoods over three feet high shall be cut or killed.

From 30 to 40 trees per acre should be selected as permanent sugar trees. In selecting these trees the following points should be considered:

a. Spacing - trees should average from 35 to 40 feet apart in order to allow full development of crowns.

b. Crown development - trees with the fullest crowns should be left in preference to spindle-tops.

c. Diameter of trees - trees as near to or of tappable size should be selected wherever possible.

d. Location in relation to roads should be considered.

In order to allow for mortality or injury an equal number of alternates should be chosen on the same basis as the permanent trees.

All types of growth which compete in any way with the permanent trees shall be removed.

All growth which competes seriously with the alternates shall be removed.

Payment shall be at the rate of \$20 per acre less a fair stumpage value on any merchantable material removed in the course of this operation. Material used as sugar wood shall be considered as having no stumpage value.

Not more than five acres shall be paid for in any one year.



PMA STATE CONFERENCE
Burlington, Vermont
April 27 and 28, 1950

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

We wish to make the following recommendations for consideration of the conference as a whole in regard to the administration of the PMA programs in Vermont:

A. We recommend that State Committee, County Committee and State and County Offices, continue their assistance to the community committeemen as during the past year. We especially recommend that educational meetings prior to training schools be held; that all counties have the community committeemen present at county committee meetings from time to time, and that more practical training for community committeemen in signing up for the new program and checking performance be given, if possible.

B. This committee believes that with the administrative funds available, community committeemen are not playing as large a part as they can in carrying out PMA activities. We would recommend that more factual price support information be given directly to the community committeemen.

C. We recommend that each county committee work out plans for its own training school with the State Office.

D. 1. We recommend no change in the procedure for the election of county committeemen except as noted below; in other words, we recommend the continuation of the delegate system in the election of county committeemen. We do suggest that, where possible, the election of county committeemen be held in conjunction with training schools.

2. We do not recommend that county committeemen be elected for a term of three years. In other words, we suggest that the present system be continued.

3. We do not recommend a system whereby county committee chairmanship would be rotated.

4. We strongly recommend that the delegate to the county convention be eligible for election to the county committee. We also recommend that the county committee choose their own chairman, rather than have him elected by the delegates as is done at present.

E. We recommend that community committeemen should have an annual tour to inspect current conservation practices.

F. We very emphatically do not recommend that county administrative funds be broken down to the community level.

G. We recommend that more meetings with community committeemen be left up to the county committee, further recommending that the counties have as many more meetings as their administrative funds will permit.

H. We recommend that the job of consignees be handled as it is at present; i.e.

1. That the county committee appoint the consignees.
2. That community committeemen should act as consignees insofar as practicable.
3. That others may act as consignees where necessary.
4. That the present maximum rates for unloading materials be continued.

I. We believe that county planning meetings are well worth the cost. We further believe that they are the most valuable part of our community system in bringing the thinking of the farmers and the communities to the county and State Committees. We recommend that insofar as possible the county committee hold group discussions with the community committeemen and farmers in their local areas prior to the county planning meetings.

J. We suggest that all county committeemen be supplied with copies of the material prepared for the various conference committees.

Members of Conference Committee

Leon N. Brainerd, Chairman
Edson E. Gifford, Vice Chairman
C. B. Doane, Secretary

<u>Committeemen</u>	<u>County</u>
Edgar W. Smith	Addison
Clyde H. Bryant	Bennington
Geo. R. Ramsay	Essex
Marshall Dunham	Franklin
Alan K. Kinney	Grand Isle
Howard T. Kittell	Lamoille
Edson E. Gifford	Orange
D. Drew Bisbec	Washington
Claud E. Bensenhaver	Windham
Merton L. Nott	Windsor

Note:

This report is based on the conference committee recommendations, and includes the changes as adopted by the general conference.

PVA STATE CONFERENCE
Burlington, Vermont
April 27 and 28, 1950

PRICE SUPPORT

This committee recognizes the importance of price support programs as a part of our production and marketing program.

The committee reviewed all the information available to them and determined that there were two commodities produced in Vermont that are particularly affected by price support programs. These are dairy products and potatoes.

Milk

Present milk marketing orders were discussed and it was agreed that the Federal Milk Order is giving our dairy farmers good protection in the market and securing adequate returns for their products. The members agreed that, without the present Federal milk orders, our dairy farmers would be in dire difficulties.

The committee agreed that some action should be taken to increase the consumption ^{of} ~~in cities~~ milk and other dairy products, especially on our own farms, [/] in our schools, institutions and factories. The committee offered the following suggestions for increasing the consumption of dairy products:

1. That both plain and flavored milk be made available in schools.
2. That milk should be put up in pints as well as half-pints for school lunches. If half-pints cost the pupil 2¢ each, a pint should be made available to them for 3¢ each.
3. That evaporated milk should be made available for school lunches in schools where the bottled milk is not easily available or is not convenient to handle.
4. That farmers urge that local merchants give butter a more prominent display.
5. That farmers purchase butter instead of oleo for their own family use.
6. That hotels and restaurants be urged to provide butter and milk in larger servings.

The committee recommended that dairy farmers be urged to spend more of their milk dollars for advertising their products.

Note:

This report is based on the conference committee recommendations, and includes the changes as adopted by the general conference.

Potatoes

The price support program for potatoes was thoroughly discussed and the committee arrived at the following conclusions:

1. It was agreed that the present support at 60% of parity was satisfactory and should be maintained for those grades of potatoes shown in the current support program announcement.
2. The committee feels that, with the support program, Vermont needs some legislation that will strengthen our grading laws so as to require that each package of potatoes be designated as to the grade of the pack.

Eggs

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that the present level of support (75% of parity) maintained through the purchase of dried eggs was satisfactory. It was recognized that, while the purchases were made principally in the middle-western states, these purchases do strengthen our eastern markets.

Grain

Grain is supported under the present act at 90% of parity. Dairy products are supported at 79% of parity and eggs at 75% of parity. These facts were discussed at length and the committee considered that the production of grain was greatly affected by the use of present highly efficient machinery. The committee recommended that the support price for grain should be nearer in line with the support price for products produced from grain.

Education

The committee urged all county committeemen to devote more time to the study of price support programs so as to be able to give the farmers in their counties a better understanding of these programs.

Members of Conference Committee

L. Earl Wilson, Chairman
Charles B. Holton, Vice Chairman
E. N. Blondin, Secretary

<u>Committeemen</u>	<u>County</u>
Howard A. Foster	Addison
Arthur Messier	Calodenia
G. M. Baldwin	Chittenden
Arthur W. Stancliff	Lamoille
F. Milo Leighton	Orange
Asa R. Drown	Orleans
A. B. Davison	Rutland
Ralph P. Davis	Washington
Charles B. Holton	Windham
Ray Whitcomb	Windsor

SOME CONFERENCE THEMES AND
AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

"The country can be thankful that we have the committee system to meet the challenge of these times."

Alvin McCormack, Director
Agricultural Conservation Programs Branch

"Our forests are left in trust to us. We are not to abuse them, but rather use their productive capacity."

Wm. Rosecrans, California
State Board of Forestry

"If there is any one thing that I have seen done since the dark days of the depression of the early thirties, it is the rebuilding of the worn-out soil of Vermont to a point where today our meadows and pastures are once again producing good clovers and grasses."

Arthur Packard, President
Vermont Farm Bureau

"No man ever really owns a piece of land. This simple fact, which should become more and more obvious as generations come and go, is still the very root of our agricultural conservation problems. . . . How presumptuous my self-styled 'ownership' really is! . . .

"This acre was here long before our forefathers lived . . . Dozens of other 'owners' will follow us, each thinking of the land as his, 'and his only.' But the tenure of each is but a fleeting moment across the face of Time. The land will be here long after our bones have gone to dust. . . .

"As 'owners' the worst that any of us can do is to destroy the productive capacity of the land . . . we not only damage the land and make it ugly to look upon, but we injure the chances of our children to make a living -- and their children after them . . . The real crime is not against Nature . . . but against our own kind."

From Crops and Soils

